

## Message Text

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S E C R E T USNATO 3258

E.O. 11652: GDS: 12/31/82

TAHS: MCAP, NATO

SUBJECT: NATO/SOVIET MARITIME EFFORT

SUMMARY. THIS MESSAGE TRANSMITS TEXT OF STATEMENT (RECEIVED JUNE 7) MADE BY ADM R. W. COUSINS, USN, SACLANT, TO THE 56TH MEETING OF THE MILITARY COMMITTEE IN CHIEFS OF STAFF SESSION OF MAY 14, 1974. THE CHAIRMAN OF THE MILITARY COMMITTEE (ADMIRAL SIR PETER HILL-NORTON) MAY REFER TO THIS STATEMENT BY SACLANT AT THE DPC MINISTERIAL MEETING ON JUNE 14.

END SUMMARY.

BEGIN TEXT:

THE WIDENING DISPARITY OF NATO/SOVIET MARITIME EFFORT

SINCE NATO'S INCEPTION, OUR NATIONS HAVE, FOR THE MOST  
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PART TAKEN FOR GRANTED SACLANT'S ABILITY TO GAIN AND MAINTAIN CONTROL OF THE ATLANTIC. I BELIEVE THAT WE HERE TODAY ARE AWARE THAT THIS IS NO LONGER THE CASE. RATHER, THE QUESTIONS WHICH CONFRONT NATO TODAY ARE, PUT QUITE SIMPLY, THE FOLLOWING:

- WILL THE NATO NATIONS MODERNISE THEIR MARITIME FORCES SUFFICIENTLY SO THAT, BY THE LATE 1970'S, THE ALLIANCE WILL BE PREPARED TO MEET THE SOVIET CHALLENGE AT SEA? AND

- DURING THE INTERIM PERIOD - WITH OUR MARITIME FORCE LEVELS AT A LOW EBB - WILL THE ALLIANCE BE ABLE TO MEET THE SOVIET CHALLENGE WHICH CURRENTLY EXISTS?

WITH REGARD TO THE FIRST QUESTION, I FIND ENCOURAGEMENT IN THE SCOPE OF THE MARITIME MODERNISATION PROGRAMMES WHICH NATIONS HAVE UNDERTAKEN. THESE PROGRAMMES - SOME OF WHICH ARE AMBITIOUS AND INNOVATIVE - IF CARRIED OUT FULLY AND ON TIME, WILL DO MUCH TO REDRESS THE IMBALANCES WHICH NOW EXIST. HOWEVER, AS I LEARN OF CUTBACKS AND DELAYS IN SOME OF THESE PROGRAMMES, MY CONCERN FOR THE FUTURE GROWS AND INTENSIFIES.

MY PURPOSE, THEREFORE, IN DISCUSSING THIS MATTER WITH YOU TODAY IS, FIRSTLY, TO ENCOURAGE SUPPORT FOR THESE MODERNISATION PROGRAMMES. WITHOUT THEM, WE ABANDON CONTROL OF THE SEAS TO THE SOVIET UNION. AND SECONDLY, I BELIEVE IT IMPORTANT TO DEVELOP FOR YOU BRIEFLY THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE SITUATION WITH WHICH WE WILL BE CONFRONTED FOR THE NEXT SEVERAL YEARS WHILE WE WAIT FOR THE MODERATION OF NATO'S MARITIME FORCES TO TAKE EFFECT. MY IMMEDIATE CONCERN IS THE DECLINING ABILITY OF THE NATO NATIONS TO COUNTER EFFECTIVELY THE GROWING SOVIET CAPABILITY TO USE SEAPOWERS IN SUPPORT OF THEIR POLITICAL GOALS, ESPECIALLY IN THOSE AREAS OF THE THIRD WORLD FROM WHICH WE DRAW SUCH A SIGNIFICANT PROPORTION OF OUR REQUIREMENTS FOR ENERGY AND OTHER RAW MATERIALS.

IF OUR SEALINES OF COMMUNICATION WERE TO BE IMPAIRED THE IMPLICATIONS FOR EUROPE AND NORTH AMERICA ARE CLEAR. PROJECTING THIS SITUATION FURTHER, INTO A STATE OF TENSION OR WAR, I AM BOUND TO SAY THAT, IN THE LIGHT OF OUR CURRENT FORCELEVELS, I HAVE DECLINING CONFIDENCE IN THE ABILITY OF MY COMMAND TO CARRY OUT ASSIGNED TASKS EARLY IN A CONFLICT  
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SITUATION WITHOUT LOSSES ON A SCALE WHICH WOULD BE UNACCEPTABLE BOTH MILITARILY AND POLITICALLY.

IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE OTHER MAJOR NATO COMMANDERS, SACLANC HAS UNDERTAKEN A NUMBER OF PRACTICAL MEASURES WHICH WILL HELP IMPROVE THIS NEAR TERM SITUATION. HOWEVER, I BELIEVE THAT ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT MEASURES THAT COULD BE TAKEN RESTS NOT IN THE HANDS OF THE MAJOR NATO COMMANDERS BUT IN THE HANDS OF OUR POLITICAL AUTHORITIES; THAT IS, THEIR EARLY DECISION TO EMPLOY THE FORCES WE HAVE IN A DETERMINED AND RESOLUTE WAY, WELL BEFORE HOSTILITIES HAVE BROKEN OUT. IN THE PRESENT SITUATION OF REDUCED FORCE LEVELS, I BELIEVE SUCH A DECISION WOULD DO MORE TO REINFORCE THE CREDI-

BILITY AND EFFECTIVENESS OF NATO'S MARITIME FORCES THAN  
ALMOST ANYTHING ELSE WE CAN DO.

EVERYONE HERE HAS LIVED THROUGH THE COLD WAR AND KNOWS  
HOW THE SOVIET UNION PROBES FOR ANY WEAKNESSES WHICH CAN BE  
EXPLOITED TO DAMAGE THE WEST IN WAYS WHICH DO NOT PLACE AT  
RISK THE VITAL INTERESTS OF THE SOVIET UNION. IN MY OPINION,  
THE EMERGING AREA OF NATO'S WEAKNESS IS AT SEA. WE MUST NOT  
ALLOW THIS PLAIN FACT TO BE PUT ASIDE BECAUSE IT IS SOMETHING  
THAT OUR PEOPLES AND LEADERS FIND UNPALATABLE.

I WOULD URGE THIS COMMITTEE, AS THE SUPREME MILITARY  
AUTHORITY OF THE ALLIANCE, TO STATE AGAIN, AS A MATTER OF  
RECORD, ITS CONCERN FOR THE SECURITY OF NATO'S SEA LINES OF  
COMMUNICATION AND TO STRONGLY URGE ACCELERATION OF THE  
MEASURES NECESSARY TO REVERSE THE CURRENT TRENDS REGARDING  
THE RELATIVE CAPABILITIES OF NATO AND WARSAW PACT MARITIME  
FORCES.

FURTHER, I RECOMMEND THAT THIS MESSAGE SHOULD BE MADE  
KNOWN TO MINISTERS AT THE NEXT DPC MEETING.

END TEXT. MCAULIFFE

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